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Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Forty-fifth session
Geneva, 23 June – 2 July 2014
Item 12 of the provisional agenda
Other business

Principles for consideration of informal documents, submitted to the Sub-committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Transmitted by the expert from China[1]

Introduction

1. In 2012, 102 working documents and 146 informal documents were submitted; the ratio of informal documents to working documents was 143%. In 2013, there were 70 working documents and 117 informal documents; the ratio of informal documents to working documents was 167%. It seems that the ratio of informal documents to working documents submitted to the Sub-Committee shows an increased trend year after year. Moreover, many informal documents were submitted just a few days before the meeting or even were submitted during the meeting. The delegates and experts often have no sufficient time to study and consider carefully these informal documents, and have even less time to seek more comments from the national industry experts while their opinions are very important regarding the technical issues as decisions may cause unpredictable impact on the industry. Although these informal documents may be discussed at the meeting, the expert from China doubts that it is possible to get full and accurate feedback at such short notice, and thinks that, as a consequence, many problems may occur, notably in relation to satisfactory and complete access to the information which is necessary for checking, or even because obtention of erroneous opinions.

[1] In accordance with the programme of work of the Sub-Committee for 2013-2014 approved by the Committee at its sixth session (refer to ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/84, para. 86 and ST/SG/AC.10/40, para. 14).

2. In order to provide more time to delegations for fully studying the informal documents and seeking more advices from other experts, the expert from China suggests that the Sub-Committee should define principles for submitting and considering informal documents.

Proposal

3. The proposed principles for submitting and considering informal documents are as follows:

(a) The informal documents related to the agenda of the Sub-Committee and the meeting briefing of other international organizations are not subject to deadlines for submission;

(b) The informal documents, except those related to comments on the working documents and those in (a), should be submitted to the secretariat four to six weeks in advance of the meeting;

(c) The informal documents in (b), which may lead to modifications to the UN *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods* or the UN *Manual of Tests and Criteria* after discussion should be deferred to the next session where they should be submitted as official working documents.